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# DEATH-AND ITS-SORROW WILLIS-DUFF-PIERCY



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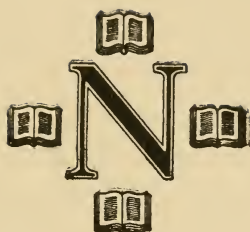
# DEATH AND ITS SORROW



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# DEATH AND ITS SORROW

By  
Willis Duff Piercy



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## DEDICATION

This book had its inspiration and origin in the recent death of my father, between whom and myself there was as close and tender a relation, I suspect, as ever existed between father and only son. His memory shall always be to me a gracious benediction. It shall be a plot of green sward on a heath of uncertainties. It shall walk with me as I walk, and lie down with me when I lie down. And it shall be my shepherd when I get lost at night on the hills of Life. To my father's memory the little volume is affectionately dedicated.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The sting of death is bad enough at best. And sorrow must be borne by each individual for himself. Grief does not deal by proxy or through attorneys. Moreover, no one can tell another how to bear bereavement. Most letters of condolence and expressions of sympathy are but empty words, well-aimed but flying wide of the target. However, there is a best that can be made of every evil. There is a way of bearing sorrow that is wise and courageous and a way that is unwise and unmanly. This little book has been prepared in the small hope that it might possibly furnish a crumb to some comfort-hungry soul bereft mourning over a new-made grave.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the literary passages on death, sorrow, and hope, in the fourth chapter, are not at all meant to be exhaustive. They are but typical and have been selected with a view to representing as many different phases and points of view as possible of these most vital of human expe-

riences. Yet it is believed that many of the noblest passages in our literature on these subjects are included here.

WILLIS DUFF PIERCY.

Mt. Vernon, Illinois.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE LOOSENING OF THE SILVER CORD

A light burns low in a quiet chamber. There are subdued voices and soft footsteps about the house. A bit of crepe is on the door and out yonder in the cemetery is a new grave waiting to receive on the morrow its silent tenant. The mystic guest who has come into the home is not a new one. He has been knocking at the doors of humanity since the world's daybreak, and I suspect he will be found knocking there still in the gray shadows of the twilight of time.

Another ship has sailed off to "the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveller returns." A father, mother, husband, wife, child, brother, sister or friend has slipped away into the misty forever. "God's finger touched him and he slept." Life's dawns and its sunsets, its Mays and its Octobers, its storms, fevers, blunders, its joys and its sorrows, its victories and its defeats, its

calumnies and its misunderstood motives are over. No more "heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." The tragedy has closed and the theater is dark forever. The light has been blown out of eyes that once shone with life and love; a voice has been stilled whose accents were your sweetest symphony. Flowers are piled up where there is no power to see them and praise is poured into ears that have lost their hearing. It is beautiful in human nature to forget the faults of the dead. But it is more beautiful to remember the virtues of the living. Dust to dust is the law of life, and soon there shall be nothing left but marble and memory.

At sunset on the first day of the spring of 1906 my father crossed the bar and sailed away into the silences. The sinking sun was in keeping with the close of his earthly day and the beginning spring marked his entrance into the new life of immortality. As I stood under the gray skies and in the blustering winds of that March afternoon, chilled in body and soul, and saw my father lowered to his narrow couch for the sleep without a wak-

ing it seemed to me that my happiness, my hope, and my heart were being buried in the casket. It was night in my soul without moon or morning; it was sea without isle or compass; winter, without April or cloud-rift; there were briars without roses, and the hungry gnawings of despair ate my spirit. I wondered why death was; why it had touched my father and had passed by so many less worthy and useful. Some men are cumbrances to society and to themselves; he was the useful promoter of its welfare, healer of the sick, cheerer of the discouraged, counselor of the perplexed, and the friend of every good thing. They had been left and he had been taken. I wondered why death had spurned the implorings of those who were tired of life and had sought out one so full of the joyousness of living. Why had my soul been selected as a target for the lightning of God's wrath while the streams of happiness flowed without interruption through the spirits of others? Out of the depths of my soul welled up the old, old query of Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?" or did

that grave end it all? And if there were another life beyond the tomb, what were its conditions? Should I see my father again and know him as I had known him in the happy days that were no more? Did he from the heights of a better life look down upon this little existence of mine, though I from the depths of the valley could see naught of him? I heard the minister's "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But if he had taken away my father specially and purposely, leaving other fathers more desirous of going and less worthy of staying I could not bless him for it. Why should I? Out of the Golgotha of my sorrow came the echo of that greater wail, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Nearness of vision destroys perspective. If one would look at a painting to the best advantage he must not stand too close. The architectural symmetry and beauty of a building appear only at a point more or less remote. The outlines of the Great Stone Face revealed themselves only to the observer who was wise enough to look from a

sufficient distance. Two honest men cannot always themselves adjudicate a matter of mutual concern; each one is so close to it that he sees but one side. No one has an entirely secure place in politics, war, or letters until posterity has had opportunity to look at him from afar and to weigh him in the unerring balances of time. We cannot see the majestic proportions of a mountain when we stand at its base. We must look far off. Distance not only "lends enchantment," but it is necessary for giving proportion and perspective.

As space is to material objects, so is time to the things of the mind. The events of human history cannot be seen in clear perspective or their real importance accurately determined until days or months or years or centuries have put themselves between observer and event. We ourselves are often too close to contemporaneous men and things to judge them entirely well. The final tribunal is time.

So, stealing through the months or the years there comes to the soul bereft a clearer view of death and bereavement. And with this clearer view comes a subtle change over

the mind of the mourner. The hard angles of anguish begin to soften; despair commences to lighten with the daybreak of hope; and rebellious resentment merges into something of resignation. Some of the questions that oppress the spirit of him who mourns over a new-made grave are answered wholly or in part; others remain forever unanswered and unanswerable. We cry them in the midnight of our anguish, and for a reply we get but the sighing of the night wind among the branches; we whisper them at the daybreak of our hope, but the whispering dies away into unanswering silence; we shout them in the valley of life, and the far-off hills hurl them back to us unanswered; we moan them on the sea-shore of death, and our reply is the everlasting wail of the waves.

No one is singled out for affliction. Sorrow is race-wide and time-long. There is scarcely a home into which Death has not entered or a soul that does not bear his scars. Tennyson thinks the universality of sorrow does not dull the edge of a particular grief.



"That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter, rather more;  
Too common! Never morning wore  
To evening but some heart did break."

It seems to me otherwise. If bereavement came to all men accidentally, then its very width would make my own pain more heavy. But the universality of sorrow precludes accident and argues design. Things common to all men must have a common source. And this common source must be man's great Creator and Law-giver. So beneath the fact of universal sorrow I see the law, and back of the law stands the Law-giver, and in the great heart of the Law-giver I see goodness to man. The vision goes no farther. But this is far enough for the hope that in some way out of grief and the grave there shall grow something good to men.

"Behold, we know not anything;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last—far off—at last to all,  
And every winter change to spring."

The Lord takes away just as he gives; not specially, but by operation of general law. When the natural terms of birth are met, a

life is born into the world; when the conditions of death are fulfilled, that same life passes out of the world. The law of death has no more enemies or favorites than the law of birth. Death is no respecter of persons. He cares no more for a "shining mark" than for a dull one.

I would not undertake to say that God never specially interferes in the affairs of men. Sometimes he may do so. Occasionally I think I see his foot-prints in human history. At times, far down the vista of things spiritual, I get glimpses of the

"far off divine event  
Toward which the whole creation moves."

But in the main God governs us with laws that have "no variableness, neither shadow of turning"; laws that are awful in their universality and steadfastness. He has written these laws in every rock and season and grass-blade and rain-drop and star and song and soul; all over the physical universe without and the spiritual world within. He has given us the law-book and mental eyes for reading it. We are responsible for results.

If I fling myself down from a height, that law which was devised for man's safety becomes the agency of my destruction. But it is hardly fair to blame God for my ignorance or wilfulness or to charge him with having taken me away. If I drink water containing the germs of disease, death may come in the cup. But the laws of disease germs are written all over the law-book. If man has not read them, God is not at fault. Man's cupidity or his hate may impel him to war. And his brother may slay him. But his brother and not God is the author of his death. Or rather his own misdoing is the murderer. The law-book solemnly declares, "Thou shalt not pile fuel too fast upon the fires of youth." I may violate this law. But for every hour of excess in the morning I must pay an hour of life toward twilight. Is it just to hold God responsible for the shortening of my day? It is written in the divine statutes that disease is transmittable from parent to child. Why this has to be, I do not understand. But it is the law. When parents overlook or disregard this law and the child withers away before it has had time to blos-

som, who is to blame? The child is pathetically innocent and God inflicts no penalty upon the parents without first declaring the law.

If I believed that God wilfully and specially tears away a baby from its mother's breast, a husband from the arms of his new-made wife, a president from his people, a poor mother from her wondering orphans, I could not worship him as a God of love. I should rather fear and hate him as the incarnation of harshness and cruelty.

The theory that there is concealed in these deaths some wise design which shall be unfolded to us by and by may be true, but it is not satisfying to me. I do not find sufficient evidence for it. Life is sweet and good and I love the companionship of my own. I am not one of those who would not call their loved ones back if they could. I would mine and would gladly give all I have if it would bring him to me again. However, as this little volume will attempt to show later, good does spring up for us out of the death of our own. But it springs up according to general law and not by special design. I can see how

the belief that a loved one has been specially called away might work some temporary consolation. But with a little more thought and a little more observation will come the reactionary doubt. And the doubt will engender rebellion and bitterness. It seems best therefore to try to find the truth from the first.

I think we need to revise somewhat our theology. We need to shift the point of view. Throughout the ages humanity has strained its senses for special voices and special signs and special revelations of Divinity. It has thought it had found God in the voice of the oracle, the mystic leaves of the sibyl and the flare of the burning bush. It has gone on pilgrimages to Delphi and the Ganges and Mecca and Jerusalem. It has deposited its reason and its conscience in books and priests and prophets. But during all this time God has been writing himself on every page of his two great law-books, the law-book of nature and the law-book of spirit. And he has been all the time saying, "Who-soever will, let him come and read." He is found alike in the strata of rocks and in the strata of souls. Every leaf that swings in

the forest is a sibylline leaf and every bush burns with God's presence and every song of thrush is an oracular voice. He is found no more on Sinai than he is on the little hill that stands sentinel over the humblest hut. The truest revelation of himself is not that given to a solitary prophet on a hill-top, but the revelation found in his universal laws unfolded to all men in the open court of Physical Science and Psychology. Every place is a holy place and every hour is a holy hour and every soul is its own prophet and priest. The mistake that we have been making is in divorcing too far Science and Religion. There is nothing more religious than science and religion ought to be scientific. If our religion and our theology had contained less of original sin and more of science, less of how man fell and more of how to get him up, less of how to curb apostasy and more of how to control appetite, less of hell hereafter and more of hygiene here, less of baptism and more of bacteria, I think we should both have pleased God and helped ourselves.

Nature has a way of taking care of her own. For the alleviation of grief she ad-

ministers some anaesthetics. One of these is an inability to realize constantly and to the full that our loved ones have actually departed forever. We refuse to comprehend that the silver cord has been forever loosed and the golden bowl forever broken. Our minds cling to the old associations and the old relations and the old mental images. It seems as if death had not come. Memory and imagination keep still walking by our side those who have quitted our paths forever. There are times when the truth falls upon us with terrific force and fury. If these times were constant the strongest spirit would break down under them. But the anaesthetic gets in its work and after dinner or on the morrow or next week the pain is temporarily lulled and our minds rest again for a time, partially oblivious of the mighty change, among the days that were.

Another one of these anaesthetics is activity. I think it is best for the newly bereaved soul to take up life again in the old paths as soon as possible. You cannot flee from your grief any more than you can from your own shadow. Sorrow must be fought



out upon the battleground of your own mind. I doubt, therefore, if travel or change of scene will work much alleviation. It is a right mental attitude more than external surroundings that helps grief.

"It is the mind that maketh good or ill,  
That maketh wretch or happy, rich or poor."

Return at once to the shop, the office, the field or the fire-side and resume your weaving at the loom of life. There are others dependent upon you and they must be provided for. Besides, there are exhilaration and health for body and spirit in honest toil. I am not sure but that activity is stronger even than sleep as a "balm of hurt minds."

Tears are another anaesthetic for the relief of those moments of excessive anguish. "To weep, is to make less the depth of grief." The eyes are no more the windows than they are the flood-gates of the soul. When the heart is too full of sorrow a part of it overflows in tears and the pressure is relieved. To weep is Nature's way and Nature is wise. Tears are the spiritual dew which keeps the gardens of our souls from drying up.



The great anaesthetic which Nature uses for stealing away the sting of grief is time. Time is the wizard that works wonders in human history and human hearts. Time is always in his work-shop though he cannot be seen. He cannot be hurried or retarded. He never loses a moment at his hammering on the anvil of change. He is the perfect revealer of the false and the friend of the great. He takes the measure of everything mortal and his measurements are true and final. Time turns disaster into benediction. And he silently heals the wounds of sorrow though the scars remain forever.

One thing Death leaves us when he robs us of our loved ones, and that is memory. Among all the mystic faculties of the soul surely memory is the most precious. It is memory that gives continuity and persistence and coherence to the ego and keeps it from being swallowed up in the bottomless now. It is possible for us to live so as to make our memories strings of golden yesterdays. Or we may make them bunches of dry and shriveled and rotten wormwood. There is a world that we live in other than this busy, hallooing, grimy, nerve-wracking sphere of dollars and

politics and war. We drift away to it at the daybreak of spring mornings, out with sun and bird and dew-drop before the selfishness of the day is begun; or strolling alone through golden autumn afternoons and woods; or sitting around the fire on winter nights thinking of the days that were but are no more. It is the world of the past and its port of entry is memory. We are all back again at the old home on the hill, no longer scattered by distance or separated by death. I am again a boy with bare feet and tattered hat and turned-up trousers and sun-burnt cheek dreaming dreams that have not come true. Voices laugh and shout from out my boyhood days—voices whose last faint echoes have died away forever from the hills of life. Forms stand before me with smiling faces and outstretched hands—forms that have returned to dust in the long ago. Memory is our intellectual savings bank in which we deposit the past. It is a kind of sounding-board whence come back to us the “lost chords” of all that has been. On its more hallowed side it is the depository of lost faces and silenced voices. Oh, thou blessed world of memory!

Thou art at least one step forward toward immortality.

Those whose loved ones have fallen prematurely should recognize that the true measure of a life is not the calendar or any unit or multiple of it. The important question is not how long one has lived but how much. In this throbbing, twentieth-century civilization of ours we live more in one week than our ancestors of the Dark Ages lived in ten years. And there are some individual souls that can pack more of real life into a single day than others about them are able to put into a month. Some men are cut down before the noon-time of their life and usefulness. But what mornings they live! Shakespeare fell at fifty-two and Byron at thirty-six and Shelley at thirty and John Keats at twenty-six. But he lived long enough to show us that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever." And the victorious victim of Calvary, who has touched mankind deeper than any other character of history, was but little more than thirty that day when he was led out to be crucified between two thieves. The number of great men who have died early in life might be

almost indefinitely multiplied. Many men of early death have written themselves deep in the hearts of their country and their age, while others whom Death has spared until dark have scarcely made their presence known. I have always thought these lines from Bailey's "Festus" among the most beautiful of our literature.

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not  
breaths;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart throbs.  
He most lives,  
Who thinks most—feels the noblest,—acts the  
best."

## CHAPTER II

### DEATH'S KINGDOM AND THE KING

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour;  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

—GRAY.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy  
rod and thy staff they comfort me."

—BIBLE.

Death is one of the universals. He follows in the footsteps of life and finally overtakes all things that live. Grass-blade and forest-tree, insect and man obey his law. The natural period of a life may be fifteen minutes or four hundred years. But it is finally lost in death. Man may subjugate all other living things, he may harness the forces of nature, build empires and destroy them, think out civilizations and bring them to pass, or pry into the secrets of stars and ages, but he yields at last to the grave. Death comes

lingering or he comes like an eye-wink; he confronts us boldly or he steals upon us un-awares; he comes with the roses of June, or with the icicles of December; in the blush of the dawning, or he steals under the black pavilion of midnight. But he comes. Sea, storm, flame, and fever are the horses of his chariot. Pistol, poison, poniard, and pneumonia are his sullen body-guard. He comes in the prick of a pin, or in the roar of artillery; he builds his nest in the germs of disease, or he creeps in through the crevices of old age. He mows down one or a thousand. But he comes, he comes, he comes. Money cannot buy Death off, sheriffs cannot eject him or armies stop the progress of his triumphal march. The blood of all the lambs in ancient Israel sprinkled on our door-posts will not turn aside the Angel of Death when he has once determined to visit our homes.

What an innumerable company of the dead! Babes that have not yet learned to lisp their mothers' names, strong men of whom the zenith sun has made no shadow, maidens just reaching out for the full-blown rose of life, and gray-haired sires who have

drunk life's goblet almost empty—all lie  
down together in the sleep eternal.

“Nigh to a grave that was newly-made,  
Leaned a sexton old on his earth-worn spade;  
His work was done, and he paused to wait,  
The funeral train at the open gate.  
A relic of bygone days was he,  
And his locks were white as the foamy sea;  
And these words came from his lips so thin:  
‘I gather them in, I gather them in.

“ ‘I gather them in! for man or boy,  
Year after year of grief and joy,  
I’ve builded the houses that lie around,  
In every nook of this burial ground;  
Mother and daughter, father and son,  
Come to my solitude, one by one;  
But come they strangers or come they kin,  
I gather them in, I gather them in.

“ ‘Many are with me but still I’m alone,  
I’m King of the dead—and I make my throne  
On a monument slab of marble cold;  
And my scepter of rule is the spade I hold;  
Come they from cottage or come they from hall,  
Mankind are my subjects, all, all, all!  
Let them loiter in pleasure or toilfully spin,  
I gather them in, I gather them in.’ ”

Death has sprinkled his frost over all the  
glories of the past. Where now are Pericles

and his Athens; Rome, and its Caesars? Where is the chattering court of Louis, and the splendid England of Elizabeth? Cleopatra no longer charms kings, Napoleon no more carves out empires with his sword, and Cicero has ceased arousing Rome with his tongue. Where are the halls of our Saxon fathers and the scop and the boar's head and the battle cry? They have all gone with the splendors of Babylon and Belshazzar.

Listen to Omar Khâyyam:

"They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank  
deep:

And Bahram, that great hunter—the Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep."

Death is no respecter of persons. He beckons alike to the saint in his prayers and the sinner in his sins. He calls the king from his throne and the peasant from his hut. He puts away in the same bed philosopher and loon. He cares no more for Dives than he does for Lazarus; or Lazarus, than Dives. Beauty and passion, hideousness and satiety are the same to him. He climbs alike the gallows of the criminal and the cross of the



martyr. Preference is not in his lexicon. He releases men from their assets and their liabilities and dissolves all the relations of life. He re-writes the laws of real estate and makes all men freeholders of equal tracts of land six feet long. Death is the herald of the only perfect brotherhood of man. In the republic of the grave there is neither friend or enemy, plaintiff or defendant, debtor or creditor, master or servant, German, Democrat, captain or Protestant. All are but men, dwelling equally together in a strange and awful brotherhood. Mighty man of millions, spurn to-day if you will yon ditch digger; but he shall be your brother by and by.

Life comes in strata like the rocks of the earth. One generation is born, carries its dinner-pail to school, raises a family and passes away, to be followed by another and another and always another, each repeating in its turn the same unvarying performance, except that as civilization advances each stratum of life is wider than its predecessor. Layer upon layer lies time's population in a strange and unending cycle of life and death. I have stood at a city street corner on a beauti-

ful afternoon and watched the streams of beauty and hope and opulence flow by. And yet in a little while all these shall be inhabitants of another city. And in this other city there shall be no gorgeously gowned ladies pouring from the theaters nor shall the busy wheels of trade rattle over the pavements. And the dockets of the police courts shall be closed. It will be a strange and silent city. The names of its inhabitants shall be carved in marble and the whippoorwill shall be its watchman. But a hundred years from this moment as I write practically all the world's present population, the seething mass that now makes its laws and writes its books and fights its battles and sings its songs and wears its jewels and dances and sits shivering, will be gone. The population of the whole earth will be changed. And,

"Somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me."

But those who are to come after us will play the drama as we have played it on the same stage and before the same footlights, only a little better all the time. Each generation and each individual

"Struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more."

All mortal paths, including the path of glory,  
lead to the churchyard.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" Can the spark of life leap the chasm of the sepulcher and glow again beyond it? Is this earthly hour all of life? Is death death? Here we come to the awful ocean of the unknowable. We rush to the shore and shout our questions of agony and hope, but we hear nothing in reply save the beating of the waves of eternity against the rocks of time. The most that we can do is to hope and to wait. Our very ignorance of another life and of the time when we shall enter it is designed for man's welfare and shows kindness in the Designer. Knowledge of these would detract from the intensity and the happiness of the life that is. One life at a time.

Ether steals away consciousness while the surgeon plays with his knife around one's vitals. Every night sleep robs us of ourselves only to give us back on the morrow refreshed and strengthened for the new life of another day. The similarity between sleep

and death seems to have appealed to all men everywhere. Tennyson calls sleep "Death's twin brother." In Roman mythology Sleep and Death were brothers and Death occupied an apartment in the larger hall of Sleep. Shakespeare causes Hamlet to meditate upon "that sleep of death." And throughout literature perhaps there is no more frequent figure of speech than the allusion to death as a sleep. But sleep is good, and men love it and court it and praise it. Coleridge speaks for the race and not for himself alone:

"O sleep, it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole."

And Shakespeare has even the guilty Macbeth burst forth into this beautiful tribute:

"Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,  
The death of each day's life; sore labor's bath;  
Balm of hurt minds; great nature's second course;  
Chief nourisher in life's feast."

Of these two things so similar, sleep and death, the one, men love and run toward; the other, they flee from and dread.

We fear that which we do not understand. Astronomical science has laid before us very

clearly the laws and causes of eclipses so that we have no concern when the sun is darkened or the moon obscured. We understand the phenomenon. But the North American Indians thought when an eclipse came that a dragon was eating up the obscured body, and quaked in terror. They did not understand. My baby daughter runs to me screaming in terror at the panting of a locomotive. She does so because she does not know what a locomotive is. I understand that it is a mighty civilizer and of good to man. And therefore I have no fear of it. Great men usually live in advance of their contemporaries. Consequently they are misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, crucified. When civilization moves up to where they stood and begins to understand them, it praises them and applauds them and crucifixion is changed to deification. If we understood death as well as we do sleep, possibly we should praise it and love it even more. Suppose one grown to maturity without having experienced sleep. With what fear or perhaps terror would he shrink from its first drowsy embraces! And yet I

much wonder if the sensation produced by death, as he slowly steals over the body, be not closely akin to the kindly trespassing of slumber. And for all we know there may be an awakening from death as sure and helpful as that from sleep. Indeed, both ether and sleep are kinds of death, but they work good to man. Can death be a kind of anaesthetic which the great Surgeon administers while he removes a soul tumor or straightens a crooked joint that we may have a completer life in another place? Or is it a sort of sleep that shall rest and invigorate us for a bigger and better to-morrow?

Trees and other citizens of the vegetable kingdom have a kind of annual death in the autumn. But the leaf principle persists through the winter and gives back the fuller life in the spring. Certain animals practically suspend life during the period of hibernation. Without food or activity they retire in a state of almost lifeless torpidity and dream the winter away. Trances and states of coma during which the normal existence of man is indefinitely suspended are more or less analogous to death. I am fully sensible of

the tremendous difference between death and all these phenomena. But they are all very suggestive as showing how far life may be suspended and resumed.

We are yet but

“An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.”

As we know more we shall fear less. The demons that went out of the back doors of yesterday will enter the front doors of tomorrow as gods. I have seen men clinging to the sterile little acre of their fathers until driven out by starvation or other necessity, only to find prosperity and wealth in the new place. Every one has looked tremblingly forward to events in his life that have afterward appeared for the best. Mountains that look insurmountable in the distance lose their difficulty when approached. There is a way over. Children cry over their broken dolls and lost marbles; but when development has brought them larger aims and broader view, their faces wear smiles where once there were tears. And they laugh to think they ever



cried for such toys. The misty prospect terrifies, but the sun-crowned retrospect is glorious. I sometimes wonder if the greatest surprise of life shall not come at the moment of death; if eyes that turn from the last look of life here shall not be filled with sweeps of possibility and splendid vistas of development yonder that our poor mortality has not so much as dreamed of. And I sometimes suspect that looking back from the other life to the crowded limitations of this, we shall smile, as does the man over the lost marbles of his boyhood, that we ever dreaded death. As the chambered nautilus that Dr. Holmes has made the basis for one of the most exquisite poems of our literature, passing from the old tenement "steals the dark arch-way through" to a new and larger and better estate, so may we find in death the portal of a new life surpassing this, it may be, so far as the splendors of noon surpass the shadows of twilight.

Death is as natural as life and as broad. It must therefore have been designed by the great Designer of all things who gave us life. All of his universal laws so far as I know them are good. What sufficient reason have



we for supposing that death is an exception? Though Death be enshrouded in the twilight mists of the unknowable, when he comes for me I will go with him, since I must, trustful that the Hand which thus far has led me will lead me still and that the sleep of the grave may bring me the dawning of a morn eternal.

“Why death is here I cannot say;  
I only know it is God’s way;  
Since he is good, it must be best  
For us. To him I leave the rest.”

When Columbus started on his voyage of discovery the new world was unknown to men. The seas he had to cross were uncharted and untried. Ignorance and superstition had them inhabited by terrible monsters and all kinds of misshapen hideousness. It was supposed that in their trackless wastes the very laws of nature ceased to be. Columbus maintained that things were not so bad as men believed them; that across the ocean lay something beneficial to the race. The wise pointed at their foreheads and smiled. They thought he was crazy. Nearly all the great deeds and nearly all the great dreams of human history have been done and dreamed by

those whom their contemporaries have called "crazy" men. In terrible dread sailors shrank from the undertaking. Finally a few bold spirits agreed to make the adventure and a day was set for sailing. The friends of the departing voyagers followed them to the shore, and as the ships sailed out of port, wept and wailed and wrung their hands confident in the despair that they should never see their own again. The ships sailed with the faith of their great admiral as their only asset.

"Behind him lay the gray Azores,  
Behind the Gates of Hercules;  
Before him not the ghost of shores,  
Before him, only shoreless seas."

But the laws of nature still held, out upon those wild, untested wastes; no hideous monsters appeared to devour the sailors. They had not sailed out of reach of God and his laws and his goodness. By and by branches of trees were seen floating past the ships; a light was seen in the distance; a little later, voices; a shore; land; and a new world, vaster and richer and better than any even sunny Spain had dreamed of.

The seas of death are unsailed before us. Others have crossed them but they have not returned to tell us the story of their experiences. We cling to the fun and flowers and songs and heartaches of this life because we know naught of another. We shrink from the trip which each one of us must make, not over "the shards and thorns of existence," but out upon these moonless expanses of death. When our sailing hour shall arrive our friends will follow us to the shore and will weep and grieve lest the parting be forever. But as for myself, I expect to set my sails with what cheer I can, unmindful of the starless night and the briny spray.

"Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark;  
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar."

And out beyond the bar as the shores of life grow dim in the distance, I expect that God's breath shall fill my sails with his "Onward"

to the haven where he would have me go. I have no fear of sailing beyond his love and his goodness.

And by and by I think I shall see the lights of another shore and again shall hear voices that quitted my mortal hearing, in the long ago.

"Silence here—for love is silent, gazing on the lessening sail;

\* \* \* \* \*

"Silence here—but, far beyond us, many voices crying, Hail!"

I think I shall find again those who one by one before me left the valleys of life. I feel that I shall see again my own. And upon their brows I think I shall behold the radiance of a morn that shall never wear away to evening, and in them there shall be a new and broader and deeper and better life unending. For the former things shall have passed away. And that which we now see through a glass darkly shall be set before our vision face to face. I find myself hoping and feeling and dreaming and believing that the pangs of death here are but the birth throes of a better life beyond.

"O, yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

"That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd  
Or cast as rubbish to the void  
When God hath made the pile complete."

## CHAPTER III

### THE BAPTISM OF SORROW

"I hold it true, whate'er befall;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all."

—TENNYSON.

Nature is ever eager to preserve a perfect equilibrium of facts, forces, and phenomena. To do this she demands a price for every gain and herself allows a compensation for every loss. This law is Emerson's "inevitable dualism" which "bisects nature." "Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its sour; every evil its good. For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something." Midnight oil and incessant labor are exacted from the scholar, but as compensation for his toil Nature pays him all the pleasures and the glories of the life intellectual. The spur of necessity often drives to achievement, but the wiles of wealth allure to sloth and failure.

There were slaves in ancient Greece who performed the menial duties of the country, leaving to their masters abundant opportunity for pursuing the things of the mind. Slavery is bad. But out of its noxious roots grew the beautiful flower of Greek culture. The power of the tempest but strengthens the roots of the oak. Children shielded from hardship are liable to grow up dependent and weak; those who are compelled to overcome obstacles become self-reliant and resourceful. Storm, flame, and earthquake destroy cities, but greater and more beautiful ones grow out of their ruins. The balmy breezes and kindling sun of the south are pleasant, but they enervate and enfeeble, while the rigors of northern latitudes have written their autograph all over the book of human achievement. John Bunyan was put into prison. But forth from its walls came "The Pilgrim's Progress." Boethius, too, felt the shackles of jail bars, but they gave him time for his "On the Consolation of Philosophy," a book which has given help and pleasure to thousands.

Out of death, supposed to be the last and

greatest of evils, the great Designer brings forth good. Soldiers have given their lives on the battlefield and sailors have offered theirs upon the altars of the untented deep. But they have secured in return the peace, prosperity and perpetuity of their country. The death of the patriots who fell at Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill was the birth of the world's greatest republic. Arnold of Winkelried gathered in his own side the spears of Sempach. But out of every drop of blood that flowed from his heart grew a plant of freedom. Those American sailors of our who went down in Havana harbor that February night with the *Maine* sounded the death knell of Spanish tyranny in the western hemisphere. Torches applied to the funeral piles of martyrs have burned the institutions of the persecutors and lighted up civilizations with their gleaming. It seems to be the order that the world shall rise to higher things on the stepping-stones of her sacrificed sons; and that the life-blood of men shall be required to dissolve the shackles that bind the bodies and minds and consciences of their brothers. The birth of a child may cost the life of the



mother. And the most beautiful fact of history is the Cross, where the Man of Sorrows sought his own death that a race of erring mortals might have life.

Some of the fairest flowers in the garden of literature have sprung from the enriched soil of a broken heart. Sorrow is Nature's soul fertilizer. The death of Mrs. Longfellow gave us the poet's "Footsteps of Angels"; and the death of his child produced the beautiful "Resignation." Bryant plunged into the translation of Homer as a means of relief from grieving for the death of his wife. Lowell's "The First Snow Fall" grew out of a tear over the grave of his little daughter. Browning's "Prospice" is but an answer to the beckoning of his departed wife. Emerson lost a son, but literature gained a "Threnody." Shelley's "Adonais" grew out of the death of Keats, and Milton wrote his "Lycidas" to commemorate the death of his friend Edward King. Arthur Hallam fell before the noon-time of his life. But the sun will never set on the new existence that Tennyson has given him in the most beautiful grief poem in our literature, "In Memoriam."

Out yonder on the Pacific coast stands one of the greatest American universities, that had its origin in the death of a young man. Disease carries away a child, the hope of some wealthy man's life. He is determined that this same malady shall not prey forever upon helpless children; he gives a large sum of money to science for the mastery of the disease, and other children are saved. All over the world Grief is building churches, endowing colleges, founding orphanages and asylums, maintaining hospitals, and binding up the broken hearts of men. If there be no life after this, Death is contributing so much to literature, art, science, and charity; it is doing so much for the world's safety and comfort and happiness that I suspect it may have in it more of good than of evil.

The deaths of our friends bring to us a clear view of the real issues of life. As we witness the final scene in some life's tragedy, when the play has been wholly played and must forever stand unchanged and unchangeable, the line of cleavage is clear between the important and the trivial, between the permanent and the transitory, the good and the bad.

How petty do deeds and mortgages and election commissions and social victories and applause and triumphs over our enemies appear in the hour of death! And how far at that time does a life of right conduct and character throw out its beneficent beams! By the death of a friend our aims are corrected, our endeavors purified and elevated, and our hold upon the important and the abiding is made stronger.

Death brings to us, too, a sharp sense of its own certainty and swiftness. Life is short. As others have gone, so we also shall go. If we would achieve anything while we are here, we must be about it. There is not one moment to be lost. When I get a clear, quiet gaze into life I am appalled by its complexity, its briefness and its awfulness. Some souls coming in with the morning, others passing out into the night; some on the heights of hope and success, others in the lowlands of despair and failure. Bridal altar, divorce court, swaddling cloth, and shroud. Great railway systems spanning continents and the little notion-store around the corner; spray of the sea and clods of the hills; "skyscraper"

and coal mine; northern freezing and southern scorching; fraud and honesty; love and spite; murder and salvation. Selling shoes and writing deeds and rolling pills and preaching sermons and directing armies and digging ditches. This is Life. And out yonder a little way in the desert is Death, waiting to take all into his bottomless maw.

Death should teach us to prize more highly those who remain. As the loss of one physical sense sometimes makes others more acute, so, perhaps, do our affections cling more closely to those whom Death spares us. As others have gone, these will go, and we wish to add to the remainder of their lives as much of happiness as we can.

Grief for the departed is one of the most beautiful of the emotions. It is the crying protest of the soul against separation and its plea for reunion in the morning of immortality. The real baptism of sorrow is the softening and refinement and purification of the individual heart. Flowers do not give up their sweetest perfumes until their petals have been torn and bruised and crushed. The swan was supposed to sing her sweetest

song in the shadow of death. And the most precious threads in the fabric of character are spun at the loom of sorrow. Dante speaks of "the sweet worm-wood of affliction." George Eliot says that "trouble but deepens our gaze into life." And Thackeray declares of Henry Esmond that he "had that further education, which neither books nor years will give but which some men will get from the silent teaching of Adversity. She is a great schoolmistress as many a poor fellow knows, that hath held out his hand to her ferule and whimpered over his lesson, before her awful chair." But she teaches her lesson well. Bailey tells us that

"the ground  
Of all great thoughts is sadness."

Surely the majors in life's symphony are serious and perhaps touched with grief, while the tones of humor are among the minors.

Death itself so serious, forces a seriousness upon the mind and a consideration of serious matters. In the burial hour of a loved one there is no room for neighborhood gossip and meaningless frivolity and empty babblings.

Like dew before the August sun all these melt away and a flock of great thoughts comes for shelter into the mind; thoughts of God and his ways, of life and its mysteries and motives, of suffering and its alleviation, of sympathy, and hope, and immortality. There are few things really more pitiable than a mind capable of bigger things covered over with the green scum of stagnation or giving over its activity to subjects too little for notice. It is not meant to be implied that the grave is forever to banish from our lives fun and laughter. Far from it. I believe in fun, and flowers, and children, and in the beauty and joy of the life that is. But the highest intellectual altitudes are attained only by the thinking of great thoughts. And this the schoolmistress Grief forces upon our attention.

It seems true that whenever one gives up with proper spirit any object of real value to himself something comes into his spiritual life to take the place of the object yielded and in compensation for it. Nature permits no man to suffer for the performance of a good deed. No one can make a contribution of money or

time or thought or sympathy to a worthy object without feeling himself ennobled and better. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," because the giver always gets back more than he gives. God will not permit himself to be any man's debtor. I think it is this psychological principle that underlies the sacrificing which has persisted through all religions. The gift of anything at all valuable in the belief that it is worthily offered brings to the sacrificer a spiritual exaltation in compensation for his offering. Nature does this to preserve her balance-sheet right. Meal and cakes and oil and doves and blood of goats offered to the gods have been doubled and poured back into the souls of the donors. So there are given to every one submissively mourning over the departure of his own, purification and refinement of spirit. And this is the real baptism of sorrow.

Men have always been proud of honorable scars. They are the badges of courage and achievement. Shakespeare has Henry the Fifth cheer the English soldiers before the battle of Agincourt with this exhortation:



"He that shall live this day and see old age,  
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors,  
And say 'To-morrow is St. Crispian.'  
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars  
And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.' "

St. Paul boasted that he bore about in his body "the marks of the Lord Jesus." It is the property of physical scars to impart to their portion of the skin a peculiar whiteness and freedom from foreign particles. So do the scars of sorrow cleanse and whiten the spirit. Soul scars are the measures of life. No man has lived until he has loved and lost; until he has felt the unutterable longing for

"the touch of a vanished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still."

Every soul that would be clean and lovely must feel the sanctification of sorrow. It must have its midnight in the garden alone. For there is no Olivet that has not first its Gethsemane.

There is an imperial word which I would breathe into every spirit; alike into the soul of the youth, who faces the east of his life like a young Lochinvar come out of the west



or a Sir Launfal riding forth into the leafy June; and into the soul of the aged, who, leaning upon his staff, is going down into the western valley and the sunset. It is the magical sesame which opens the door to happiness and greatness. It is the scullion of yesterday to be crowned king of to-morrow. This word is "Service." Across the centuries and the continents comes ringing that dictum from Galilee, "But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." And I would add, "He that is happiest among you shall be your servant." The parable of The Good Samaritan contains all the germs of good ethics, practical religion, happiness, and greatness of character. Men are great not in proportion to what they get out of the world, but in proportion to what they put into it. And the same is true of men who would be happy. Happiness has no separate existence of its own. It is found only in the companionship of other things. He who strives after it for himself chases a will-o'-the-wisp. But whoever seeks it for another finds it both for that other and for himself. You will never find the magical secret of happiness until you

learn to demand nothing for yourself,—but on the other hand to give all you are and have and can get to those about you. “But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” When set against the background of the world’s selfishness this may seem foolish philosophy. But it is not. It is the wisest sort of wisdom. This life of service I commend to all, but especially do I urge it upon the soul bowed down with sorrow. You will find the surest cure for your own wound in helping to heal the wounds of another.

And the preparation for this life of service,—a life which shall bring to yourself happiness and greatness of character, that shall wipe away tears, bind up broken hearts, heal the soul-sick, give spiritual sight to the sightless, food to the hungry, and a cloak to the naked; that shall make the world

brighter and better and more beautiful,—is the baptism of sorrow. Some of the sweetest characters I have known, those who have been the greatest benediction to my own life, have been cripples or invalids or persons whose lives have been spent in the shadow of a great sorrow. O ye souls bereft! Yonder is one who has watched the long night through but has seen no light. Point out to him the daybreak. Another has traveled all day long and now at evening, footsore and weary, he has given up the journey and sat down in despair but a mile from the city, not knowing it is so near. Point out to him its spires and the way. The Infinite has something better for us ahead. The now may be filled with winter but the hereafter shall be full of roses. The valleys are enshrouded in mists. But there is sunlight on the hills.

Washington Irving calls home “that rallying-place of the affections.” Even so are our cemeteries the nurseries of purer aspirations. The dawn of a better life for many a man has been the earthly sunset of some loved one. Has your “other self,” your heart’s core, been taken from you? A nobler self shall be

given you now, and the lost may be found to-morrow. Every breeze that blows through our cypress trees carries away the dust of selfishness. And every flower that lifts its blushing petals over the graves of our departed paints upon our souls its own purity and whispers into our troubled spirits its tender message of a spring eternal beyond the winter of the tomb. Standing over the graves of your departed, forget their faults but build into your lives their virtues; be inspired by death to holier living and to loftier aspirations. Defy its assaults with the hope of immortality. And await in patience the morning.

“So long thy power has blest me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent till  
The night is gone;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

## CHAPTER IV

### DEATH, SORROW AND HOPE IN LITERATURE

As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

—BIBLE, *Psalms*.

Man wants but little; nor that little long;  
How soon must he resign his very dust,  
Which frugal nature lent him for an hour.

—YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour;  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

—GRAY, *Elegy in Country Church-yard*.

We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.

—BIBLE, *Samuel*.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep  
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank  
deep;

And Bahram that great hunter,—the Wild Ass  
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

—OMAR KHAYYAM, *Fitzgerald's translation.*

Now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt  
seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

—BIBLE, *Job.*

One morn I missed him on the accustomed hill,  
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;  
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn nor at the wood, was he.

—GRAY, *Elegy.*

I learned that one poor moment can suffice  
To equalize the lofty and the low.  
We sail the sea of life—a calm One finds  
And One a tempest—and, the voyage o'er,  
Death is the quiet haven of us all.

—WORDSWORTH, *Epitaphs.*

\*            \*            bear in mind  
How fleeting and how frail is human life.

—WORDSWORTH, *Epitaphs.*

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud.  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,  
Man passes from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
 Be scattered around and together be laid;  
 And the young and the old, and the low and the high,  
 Shall moulder to dust and together shall lie.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draft of a breath,  
 From the blossom of health, to the paleness of death,  
 From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—  
 Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

—WILLIAM KNOX, *Oh, Why should the Spirit of Mortal  
 be Proud?*

Yet a few days, and thee  
 The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
 In all his course;       \*       \*       \*

The hills,  
 Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales  
 Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
 The venerable woods; rivers that move  
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
 That make the meadows green; and poured round  
 all,  
 Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—  
 Are the solemn decorations all  
 Of the great tomb of man.

—BRYANT, *Thanatopsis*.

Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel  
 of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the  
 case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel  
 of the Resurrection.

—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *Autocrat of the Breakfast  
 Table*.

Like the dew on the mountain,  
Like the foam on the river,  
Like the bubble on the fountain,  
Thou art gone; and forever.

—SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Lady of the Lake*.

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

—BIBLE, *Ecclesiastes*.

The gap between a King  
And me, a nameless gazer in the crowd,  
Seemed not so wide as that which stretches now  
Betwixt us two—this dead one and myself.  
Untitled, dumb and deedless, yet he is  
Transfigured by a touch from out the skies  
Until he wears, with all unconscious grace,  
The strange and sudden dignity of death.

—RICHARD E. BURTON.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—  
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;  
How oft hereafter rising look for us  
Through this same garden—and for *one* in vain.

—OMAR KHAYYAM, *Fitzgerald's translation*.



Do not forever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust;  
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*.

Leaves have their time to fall,  
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
And stars to set—but all,  
Thou hast all seasons for thy own, O death.

—MRS. FELICIA D. HEMANS, *Hour of Death*.

The solitary, silent, solemn scene,  
Where Caesars, heroes, peasants, hermits lie,  
Blended in dust together; where the slave  
Rests from his labors; where th' insulting proud  
Resigns his power; the miser drops his hoard;  
Where human folly sleeps.

—SIR EDWARD DYER, *Ruins of Rome*.

Whatever pangs they had are o'er;  
Whatever dark defects are past.  
What care they now, on that still shore,  
For bleak misfortune's blast?

—W. R. WALLACE.

Vanity of vanities, the preacher saith,  
All things are vanity. The eye and ear  
Cannot be filled with what they see and hear;

Like early dew, or like the sudden breath  
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth,  
Is man tossed to and fro by hope and fear;  
So little joy hath he, so little cheer  
Till all things end in the long sleep of death.

—CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI.

Out, out, brief candle out!  
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Macbeth*.

And then I think of one who in her youthful beauty  
died,  
The fair, meek blossom that grew up and faded by  
my side;  
In the cold, moist earth we laid her, when the forest  
cast the leaf;  
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life  
so brief;  
Yet not unmeet it was that one like that young  
friend of ours,  
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the  
flowers.

—BRYANT, *Death of the Flowers*.

The mighty ones of earth shall lay them down  
In their low beds, and Death shall set his seal  
On Beauty's marble brow, and cold and pale,  
Bloomless and voiceless, shall the lovely ones  
Go to the 'Congregation of the dead'.

—CASKET.

Life! we've been long together  
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;  
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear:  
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;  
Then steal away, give little warning.  
Choose thine own time;  
Say not Good-Night, but in some brighter clime  
Bid me Good-Morning.

—ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD.

Death, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:  
Look how compounded, with what care!  
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee  
Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,  
Keats and Gotama excellent,  
Omar Khâyyam and Chaucer bright,  
And Shakespeare for a King-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt;  
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;  
'Tis thy rich stirrup-cup to me;  
I'll drink it down right smilingly.

—SIDNEY LANIER, *The Stirrup-cup*.

The garlands wither on your brow,  
Then boast no more your mighty deeds;  
Upon Death's purple altar now  
See where the victor-victim bleeds.  
Your heads must come  
To the cold tomb;  
Only the actions of the just  
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.

—JAMES SHIRLEY.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid,  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

—GRAY, *Elegy*.

Dear, beauteous Death! the jewel of the Just,  
Shining nowhere, but in the dark;  
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
Could man outlook that mark.

—HENRY VAUGHAN.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of childhood:  
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,  
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.  
For some they have died, and some they have left  
me,  
And some are taken from me; all are departed;  
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

—CHARLES LAMB.

And the width of the waters, the hush  
Of the gray expanse where he floats,  
Freshening its current and spotted with foam  
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike  
Peace to the Soul of the man on its breast—  
As the pale waste widens around him,  
As the banks fade dimmer away,  
As the stars come out, and the night-wind  
Brings up the stream  
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *The Future*.

So when that night I pray'd  
To God, I wept, and said:  
"Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,  
Not vexing thee in death,  
And thou rememberest of what toys  
We made our joys,  
How weakly understood,  
Thy great commanded good,  
Then, fatherly not less  
Than I, whom thou hast moulded from the clay,  
Thou'lt leave thy wrath and say,  
I will be sorry for their childishness."

COVENTRY PATMORE.

So when the Angel of the darker Drink  
At last shall find you by the river brink,  
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul  
Forth to your lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

If a man looks at it (death) in itself, he will then consider it to be nothing else than an operation of nature: and if any one is afraid of an operation of nature, he is a child.

—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS.

Rest, therefore, thou,  
Whose early guidance trained my infant steps—  
Rest, in the bosom of God, till the brief sleep  
Of death is over, and a happier life  
Shall dawn to waken thing insensible dust.

—BRYANT, *Hymn to Death*.

I am: how little more I know!  
Whence came I? whither do I go?  
A centered self, which feels and is;  
A cry between the silences;  
A shadow-birth of clouds at strife  
With sunshine on the hills of life;  
A shaft from Nature's quiver cast  
Into the Future from the Past;  
Between the cradle and the shroud,  
A meteor's flight from cloud to cloud.

—WHITTIER, *Questions of Life*.

This present life of men on earth, O King, in comparison with that time which is unknown to us, seems to me thus: as if you were sitting at a banquet with your rulers and thanes in the winter-time and a fire were kindled and the hall warmed, and it were raining and snowing and storming with-

out; and a sparrow should suddenly fly through the hall, coming in at one door and going out at another. What time he is within, he is not oppressed by the storm of the winter. But that is but the twinkling of an eye. For he came out of the winter and soon shall return into the winter again. So does this life of men manifest itself for a while. What went before or what shall come after we do not know.

FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON VERSION OF  
BEDE'S ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.  
*(Author's translation of the passage.)*

This world death's region is: the other life's;  
And here, it should be one of our first strifes  
So to front death, as men might judge us past it;  
For good men but see death, the wicked taste it.

—BEN JONSON.

O, sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this  
day is done,  
The voice that now is speaking may be beyond the  
sun—  
Forever and forever with those just souls and true;  
And what is life, that we should moan? Why  
make we such ado?

—TENNYSON.

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all

evils. I might say much of the commodities that death can sell a man; but briefly, death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him, is not at home.

—FRANCIS BACON, *Essays*.

Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?  
What tho' we wade in wealth or soar in fame?  
Earth's highest station ends in "Here he lies;"  
And "dust to dust" concludes her noblest song.

—YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*.

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

—LONGFELLOW, *Psalm of Life*.

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,  
It seems most strange to me that men should fear;  
Seeing that death, a necessary end,  
Will come, when it will come.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Julius Caesar*.

Affliction is the good man's shining scene;  
Prosperity conceals his brightest ray:  
As night to stars, woe lustre gives to man.

—YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*.

Grief is a tattered tent  
Wherethrough God's light doth shine.

—LUCY LARCOM.



Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopp'd,  
Doth burn the heart to cinders.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Titus Andronicus*.

Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

—BIBLE, *Ecclesiastes*.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,  
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;  
No traveller ever reached that blest abode,  
Who found not thorns and briars in his road.

—WILLIAM COWPER.

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions  
Not from the ground arise,  
But oftentimes celestial benedictions  
Assume this dark disguise.

—LONGFELLOW, *Resignation*.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

—BIBLE, *Corinthians*.

O Time! the beautifier of the dead,  
Adorner of the ruin, comforter  
And only healer when the heart hath bled—  
Time! the corrector where our judgments err  
The test of truth, love,—sole philosopher!

—BYRON, *Childe Harold*.

Catch! then, O! catch, the transient hour;  
Improve each moment as it flies;  
Life's a short summer—man a flower—  
He dies—alas! how soon he dies.

—DR. JOHNSON.

That very law which moulds a tear,  
And bids it trickle from its source,  
That law preserves the earth a sphere,  
And guides the planets in their course.

—ROGERS.

He will swallow up death in victory; and the  
Lord God will wipe away tears, from off all faces.

—BIBLE, *Isaiah*.

If thou hast ever felt that all on earth  
Is transient and unstable, that the hopes  
Which man reposes on his brother man  
Are but broken reeds; if thou hast seen  
That life itself "is but a vapor," sprung  
From time's upheaving ocean, decked, perhaps,  
With here and there a rainbow, but full soon  
To be dissolved and mingled with the vast  
And fathomless expanse that rolls its waves  
On every side around thee; if thy heart  
Has deeply felt all this, and thus has learned  
That earth has no security, then go  
And place thy trust in God.

—CASKET.

We paused, as if from that bright shore  
Beckoned our dear ones gone before;  
And still our beating hearts to hear  
The voices lost to mortal ear.

"So," prayed we, "when our feet draw near  
The river, dark with mortal fear,  
And the night cometh chill with dew,  
O, Father! let thy light break through!  
And in thy beckoning angels know  
The dear ones whom we loved below."

—WHITTIER, *The River Path*.

And the stately ships go on  
To the haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!

—TENNYSON, *Break, Break, Break*.

Oft, in the stilly night,  
Ere slumber's chain has bound me  
Fond Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me;  
The smiles, the tears,  
Of boyhood's years,  
The words of love then spoken;  
The eyes that shone  
Now dimmed and gone,  
The cheerful hearts now broken!

—THOMAS MOORE.

Mysterious Night! \* \*

Who could have guessed such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun? or who divined  
When bud and flower and insect lay revealed  
Thou to such countless worlds hadst made us blind?  
Why should we then shun Death with anxious  
    strife?

If light conceals so much, wherefore not life?

—JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair,  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other wound we seek to heal, every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open, this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude. \* \* \* No, the love which survives the tomb is one of the noblest attributes of the soul. If it has its woes, it has likewise its delights; and when the overwhelming burst of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection, when the sudden anguish and the convulsive agony over the present ruins of all that we most loved is softened away into pensive meditation on all that it was in the days of its loveliness, who would root out such a sorrow from the heart? Oh, the grave! the grave! It buries every

error, covers every defect, extinguishes every resentment! From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections.

—WASHINGTON IRVING, *Sketch Book*.

But time hath power to soften all regrets,  
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress  
Due resignation.

—WORDSWORTH, *The Excursion*.

Across her soul a heavy sorrow swept,  
As tidal waves sweep sometimes o'er the land,  
Leaving her face, when back it ebb'd and crept,  
Tranquil and purified, like tide-washed sand.

—BESSIE CHANDLER.

Away! we know that tears are vain,  
That Death nor heeds nor hears distress;  
Will this unteach us to complain?  
Or make one mourner weep the less?  
And thou, who tell'st me to forget,  
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

—BYRON.

Come away: for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell;  
But in a city glorious—  
A great and distant city—have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have staid with us!

—TENNYSON.

There's a magical Isle up the river of Time,  
Where the softest of airs are playing;  
There's a cloudless sky and a tropical clime,  
And a song as sweet as a vesper chime,  
And the Junes with the roses are staying.

And the name of this Isle is the Long Ago.  
And we bury our treasures there:  
There are brows of beauty and bosoms of snow—  
There are heaps of dust, but we loved them so!  
There are trinkets and tresses of hair.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TAYLOR.

When our hearts shall feel a sting  
From ill we meet or good we miss,  
May touches of his memory bring  
Fond healing, like a mother's kiss.

—WORDSWORTH, *The Excursion*.

Oh, when the room grows slowly dim,  
And life's last oil is nearly spent,  
One gush of light these eyes will brim,  
Only to think she came and went.

—LOWELL.

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou thinkest thou dost overthrow  
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.  
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,  
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must  
flow;

And soonest our best men with thee do go,—  
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery!  
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate  
men,  
And dost with poison, war and sickness dwell;  
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well  
And better, than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou  
then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,  
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt  
die!

—JOHN DONNE.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,  
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned  
On lips that are for others; deep as love,  
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;  
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

—TENNYSON, *Princess*.

The ground  
Of all great thoughts is sadness.

—BAILEY.

Three treasures,—love and light  
And calm thoughts, regular as infant's breath;  
And three firm friends, more sure than day or night,  
Himself, his Maker, and the Angel Death.

—COLERIDGE.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

BIBLE, *Job*.

For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

—BIBLE, *James*.

Let Fate do her worst; there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy;  
And which come in the night-time of sorrow and  
care,

To bring back the features that joy used to wear;  
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled;  
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled,  
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

—THOMAS MOORE.

Strange glory streams through life's wild rents,  
And through the open door of death  
We see the heaven that beckoneth  
To the beloved going hence.

—GERALD MASSEY.



Rest not! Life is sweeping by.  
Go and dare before you die;  
Something mighty and sublime  
Leave behind to conquer time!  
Glorious 'tis to live for aye,  
When these forms have passed away.

—GOETHE (*Anonymous Translation*).

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.  
O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy  
victory?

—BIBLE, *Corinthians*.

There is no death—the thing that we call death  
Is but another, sadder name for life,  
Which is itself an insufficient name,  
Faint recognition of that unknown life—  
That Power whose shadow is the Universe.

—R. H. STODDARD.

I like that ancient Saxon phrase which calls  
The burial ground God's Acre! It is just;  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust.

Into its furrows shall we all be cast,  
In the sure faith, that we shall rise again  
At the great harvest, when the archangel's blast  
Shall winnow, like a fan, the chaff and grain.

—LONGFELLOW.

Death is the gate of life.

—BAILEY, *Festus*.

Whoso laments, that we must doff this garb  
Of frail mortality, thenceforth to live  
Immortally above; he hath not seen  
The sweet refreshing of that heavenly shower.

—DANTE, *Cary's translation*.

Thou Pow'r Supreme, whose mighty scheme,  
These woes of mine fulfill,  
Here, firm I rest, they must be best,  
Because they are thy will;  
Then all I want (O, do Thou grant  
This one request of mine!)  
Since to enjoy thou dost deny,  
Assist me to resign.

—BURNS.

But wherefore weep? Her matchless spirit soars  
Beyond where splendid shines the orb of day;  
And weeping angels lead her to those bowers  
Where endless pleasures virtue's deeds repay.

And shall presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign,  
And madly godlike Providence accuse?  
Ah! No, far fly from me attempts so vain;—  
I'll ne'er submission to my God refuse.

—BYRON.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be  
comforted.

—BIBLE.

Yet 'twill only be a sleep:  
When, with songs and dewy light,  
Morning blossoms out of Night,  
She will open her blue eyes  
'Neath the palms of paradise,  
While we foolish ones shall weep.

—EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.

The storms of wintry time will quickly pass  
And one unbounded spring encircle all.

—THOMSON, *Seasons*.

O, the bitterness of parting cannot be done away  
Till I meet my darlings walking where their feet  
can never stray;  
When I no more am drifted upon the surging tide,  
But with them safely landed upon the river side:  
Be patient, heart, while waiting to see their shining  
way,  
For the little feet in the golden street can never go  
astray.

—ANONYMOUS.

For when the morn came dim and sad,  
And chill with early showers,  
Her quiet eye-lids closed;—she had  
Another morn than ours.

—HOOD.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their  
eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sor-

row, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

—BIBLE, *Revelations*.

Death is the chillness that precedes the dawn;  
We shudder for a moment, then awake  
In the broad sunshine of the other life.

—LONGFELLOW, *Michael Angelo*.

Death is delightful. Death is dawn,  
The waking from a weary night  
Of fevers into truth and light.

—JOAQUIN MILLER, *Even So*.

I hear, from the depths of the river,  
Sweet words that my spirit thrill;  
We are parted, but not forever:  
We are living and loving still!

And my soul no more is lonely  
Nor throbs with a sense of pain,  
For the loved, who were once mine only,  
I know will be mine again.

—ANONYMOUS.

My friends, I hope you do not call that death.  
That is an autumnal sunset. That is a crystalline  
river pouring into a crystal sea. That is the solo  
of human life overpowered by the Hallelujah  
chorus. That is a queen's coronation. That is  
Heaven.

—T. DEWITT TALMAGE.

Dread Omnipotence alone  
Can heal the wound he gave—  
Can point the brimful, grief-worn eyes  
To scenes beyond the grave.

—BURNS.

I straight obey'd: and with mine eye return'd  
Through all the seven spheres: and saw this globe  
So pitiful of semblance, that perforce  
It moved my smiles: and him in truth I hold  
For wisest, who esteems it least; whose thoughts  
Elsewhere are fix'd, him call and best.

—DANTE (*Cary's translation*).

When obstacles and trials seem  
Like prison walls to be  
I do the little I can do,  
And leave the rest to Thee.

—FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER.

Life mocks the idle hate  
Of his arch-enemy Death—Yea seats himself  
Upon the tyrant's throne—the Sepulcher,  
And of the triumphs of his ghastly foe  
Makes his own nourishment. For he came forth  
From thine own bosom, and shall have no end.

—BRYANT.

Why shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death?  
Who waits thee at the portal of the skies,  
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,  
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

O, what were life if life were all? Thine eyes,  
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see  
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,  
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of  
his saints.

—BIBLE, *Psalms*.

The Night is mother of the Day,  
The Winter of the Spring,  
And ever upon old Decay  
The greenest mosses cling.  
Behind the cloud the starlight lurks,  
Through showers the sunbeams fall;  
For God, who loveth all His works,  
Has left His Hope with all!

—WHITTIER, *Dream of Summer*.

Never here, forever there!  
Where all parting, pain and care,  
And death and time shall disappear,  
Forever there, but never here!

—LONGFELLOW, *The Old Clock on the Stairs*.

I shall know the loved who have gone before,  
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,  
When over the river, the peaceful river,  
The angel of death shall carry me.

—NANCY A. W. PRIEST.

And parted thus they rest, who played  
Beneath the same green tree;  
Whose voices mingled as they prayed  
Around one parent knee!

They that with smiles lit up the hall,  
And cheered with song the hearth—  
Alas! for love, if thou wert all,  
And naught beyond, O earth!

—MRS. HEMANS.

The light of smiles shall fill again  
The lids that overflow with tears;  
And weary hours of woe and pain  
Are promises of happier years.

And thou, who o'er thy friend's low bier,  
Dost shed the bitter drops like rain,  
Hope that a brighter, happier sphere  
Will give him to thy arms again.

For God hath marked each sorrowing day  
And numbered every secret tear,  
And heaven's long age of bliss shall pay  
For all his children suffer here.

—BRYANT.

The door of death is made of gold,  
That mortal eyes cannot behold:  
But, when the mortal eyes are closed,  
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,  
The soul awakes, and wondering sees

In her mild hand, the golden keys.  
The grave is Heaven's golden gate,  
And rich and poor around it wait.

—WILLIAM BLAKE.

I know it is over, over  
I know it is over at last!  
Down sail! the sheathed anchor uncover  
For the stress of the voyage has passed!  
Life, like a tempest of ocean,  
Hath outbreathed its ultimate blast;  
There's but a faint sobbing seaward,  
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward;  
And behold! like the welcoming quiver  
Of heart-pulses throbb'd through the river,  
Those lights in the harbor at last,  
The heavenly harbor at last!

—PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

Death takes us by surprise,  
And stays our hurrying feet;  
The great design unfinished lies  
Our lives are incomplete.

—LONGFELLOW.

Let us reflect in another way, and we shall see that there is great reason to hope that death is a good; for one of two things—either death is a state of nothingness and utter unconsciousness, or, as men say, there is a change and migration of the soul from this world to another. Now, if death is like this, (nothingness) I say that to die is gain; for eternity



is then only a single night. But if death is the journey to another place, and there, as men say, all the dead are, what good, O my friends and judges, can be greater than this? Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

—SOCRATES.

Weep not for death,  
'Tis but a fever stilled,  
A pain suppressed,—a fear at rest,  
A solemn hope fulfilled.  
The moonshine on the slumbering deep  
Is scarcely calmer. Wherefore weep?

Weep not for death!  
The fount of tears is sealed,  
Who knows how bright the inward light  
To those closed eyes revealed;  
Who knows what holy love may fill,  
The heart that seems so cold and still.

—ANONYMOUS.

Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be.

—TENNYSON, *Maud*.

Death lies on her, like an untimely frost  
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

—SHAKESPEARE, *Romeo and Juliet*.

The world recedes; it disappears!  
Heav'n opens on my eyes! my ears  
With sounds seraphic ring.  
Lend, lend your wings! I mount! I fly!

—POPE, *Dying Christian to His Soul*.

Friend after friend departs!  
Who hath not lost a friend?  
There is no union here of hearts  
That finds not here an end;  
Were this frail world our only rest,  
Living or dying, none were blest.

—JAMES MONTGOMERY, *Friends*.

Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,  
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?  
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,  
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,  
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake  
His rugged path; nor dare to view alone  
His future doom which is but to awake.

—KEATS, *On Death*.

Sometime when all life's lessons have been learned,  
And sun and stars forevermore have set,  
The things which our weak judgment here have  
spurned,

The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet,  
Will flash before us, out of life's dark night,  
As stars shine more in deeper tints of blue,  
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,  
And how what seemed reproof was love most  
true.

—MAY RILEY SMITH.

In the rippling trees I hear  
Flowing waves and dipping oars;  
And beloved voices near,  
Seem to steal from fading shores.

—HARRIET MCEWEN KIMBALL.

Another hand is beckoning us,  
Another call is given;  
And glows once more with Angel-steps  
The path which reaches Heaven.

There seems a shadow on the day,  
Her smile no longer cheers;  
A dimness on the stars of night,  
Like eyes that look through tears.

Alone unto our Father's will  
One thought hath reconciled;  
That He whose love exceedeth ours  
Hath taken home His child.

Fold her, O Father, in thine arms,  
And let her henceforth be  
A messenger of love between  
Our human hearts and thee.

—WHITTIER.

O, sweet be thy sleep in the land of the grave,  
My dear little angel forever!  
Forever? O no! let not man be a slave,  
His hopes from existence to sever.

Though cold be the clay, where thou pillow'st thy  
head  
In the dark, silent mansions of sorrow,  
The spring shall return to thy low, narrow bed,  
Like the beam of the day-star to-morrow.

—BURNS.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from  
henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest  
from their labors; and their works do follow them.

—BIBLE, *Revelations*.

Death stands above me, whispering low  
I know not what into my ear:  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Our share of night to bear,  
Our share of morning,  
Our blank in bliss to fill,  
Our blank in scorning.

Here a star, and there a star,  
Some lose their way.  
Here a mist, and there a mist,  
Afterwards—day!

—EMILY DICKINSON.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon  
My place with them will be,  
And I with them shall travel on  
Through all futurity.

—ROBERT SOUTHEY.

God lent him and takes him, you sigh,  
Nay, there let me break with your pain:  
God's generous in giving, say I,  
And the thing which he gives, I deny  
That he ever can take back again.

So look up, friends! you who indeed  
Have possessed in your house a sweet piece  
Of the heaven which men strive for, must need  
Be more earnest than others are speed  
Where they loiter, persist where they cease.

You know how one angel smiles there,—  
Then courage. 'Tis easy for you  
To be drawn by a single gold hair  
Of that curl, from earth's storm and despair  
To the safe place above us, Adieu.

—MRS. BROWNING.

The mourner dreamt of Heaven!  
Before his eyes, so long with sorrow dim,  
A glorious sheen, like lengthened lightning blazed;  
And from the clouds one face looked down on  
him,  
Whose beauty thrilled his veins, and as he gazed  
He knew he gazed on Heaven!

—ANONYMOUS.

Eternal hope! when yonder spheres sublime  
Pealed their first notes to sound the march of time,  
Thy joyous youth began—but not to fade,  
When all the sister planets have decayed,  
When wrapped in fire the realms of ether glow,  
And Heaven's last thunder shakes the world below,  
Thou, undismayed, shalt o'er the ruins smile,  
And light thy torch at Nature's funeral pile.

—CAMPBELL.

Nor there should cypress weave its gloom;  
O not by graves should tears be shed;  
No!—gratulations for the dead,  
And roses for the tomb!

—W. R. WALLACE.

Do something for somebody gladly,  
'Twill sweeten your every care;  
In sharing the sorrows of others  
Your own are less hard to bear.  
Do something for somebody always,  
Whatever may be your creed;  
There's nothing on earth can help you  
So much as doing a kindly deed.

—VENIE WHITNEY.

A sacred burden is this life we bear;  
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,  
Stand up, and walk beneath it steadfastly.  
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,  
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

—FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
And tossed by storm and flood,  
To one fixed trust my spirit clings;  
I know that God is good!

I long for household voices gone,  
For vanished smiles I long,  
But God hath led my dear ones on,  
And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

And so beside the Silent Sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care.

—WHITTIER, *The Eternal Goodness.*

The poor, oppressed, honest man  
Had never, sure, been born,  
Had there not been some recompense  
To comfort those that mourn.

—BURNS.

And they who are wandering on the earth,  
How glad will the meeting be  
Of that widely scattered household band  
In the land beyond the sea.

—MISS M. REMICK.

In the path of duty grows many a thorn,  
And bleak is the scorn of a selfish world;  
But there never was night without its morn,  
And after the tempest the clouds are furled;  
For over all spreadeth the bright blue sky,  
And we trust in our God, who is always nigh.

—WILLIAM WINTER.



Learn the mystery of progression duly:  
Do not call each glorious change decay;  
But know we only hold our treasures truly,  
When it seems as if they passed away.

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

Hast thou not glimpses, in the twilight here,  
Of mountains where immortal morn prevails?  
Comes there not through the silence, to thine ear,  
A gentle rustling of the morning gales?  
A murmur, wafted from that glorious shore,  
Of streams that water banks forever fair;  
And voices of the loved ones gone before,  
More musical in that celestial air?

—BRYANT.

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still  
Will lead me on,  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone;  
And with the morn those angel faces smile  
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, *Lead, Kindly Light*.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain  
flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

—BRYANT, *To a Waterfowl*.

But, as I gazed e'en through the mist of tears,  
There shone a clearer light; and now I know  
That Death is but the flaring of the torch,  
When angels bear it from its house of clay  
Forth to the outer air, where it shall burn  
Free and with undiminished radiance evermore.  
And though the world is lone without thee,  
And from day to day thy presence more we miss,  
Yet still the time is swiftly drawing nigh,  
When we must tread the dim and narrow path;  
And blessed they who groping in its gloom,  
Though sightless still can feel the clasping hands  
Of them that went before, and know the way.

—MRS. A. M. BUTTERFIELD.

As a fond mother, when the day is o'er,  
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,  
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,  
And leaves his broken playthings on the floor,  
Still gazing at them through the open door,  
Nor wholly reassured and comforted  
By promises of others in their stead  
Which though more splendid, may not please him  
more;

So Nature deals with us, and takes away  
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand  
Leads us to rest so gently that we go  
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,  
Being too full of sleep to understand  
How far the unknown transcends the what we  
know!

—LONGFELLOW.

Home is everywhere to thee,  
Who canst thine own dwelling be;  
Yea, though ruthless Death assail thee,  
Still thy lodging will not fail thee:  
Still thy Soul's thine own; and she  
To a House removed shall be;  
An eternal House above,  
Wall'd and roof'd and pav'd with Love.

—JOSEPH BEAUMONT.

But this we know: Our loved and dead, if they  
should come this day,  
Should ask us, "What is life?" not one of us could  
say.

Life is a Mystery as deep as ever death can be;  
Yet, oh! how sweet it is to us this life we live and  
see!

Then might they say, these vanished ones—and  
blessed is the thought:

"So death is sweet to us beloved! though we may  
tell you naught.

We may not tell it to the quick, this mystery of  
death;

Ye may not tell us, if ye would, the mystery of  
breath;"

The child who enters life comes not with knowledge  
or intent;

So those who enter death must go as little children  
sent.

Nothing is known! But I believe that God is over-  
head;

And as life is to the living, so death is to the dead.

—MARY MAPES DODGE.

I cannot feel that thou art far,  
Since near at hand the angels are:  
And when the sunset gates unbar,  
Shall I not see thee waiting stand,  
And white against the evening star,  
The welcome of thy beckoning hand?

—WHITTIER.

Fair hope is dead, and light  
Is quenched in night.  
What sound can break the silence of despair?  
O doubting heart!  
The sky is overcast,  
Yet stars shall rise at last,  
Brighter, for darkness past,  
And angels' silver voices stir the air.

—ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

—TENNYSON, *In Memoriam*.

Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,  
    Illumes and cheers our way;  
And still, as darker grows the night,  
    Emits a brighter ray.

—OLIVER GOLDSMITH, *The Captivity*.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan that moves  
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

—BRYANT, *Thanatopsis*.

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be  
That this low breath is gone from me,  
    And round my bier ye come to weep,  
Let one most loving of you all,  
Say "Not a tear must o'er her fall!  
    He giveth His beloved sleep."

—MRS. BROWNING, *He Giveth His Beloved Sleep*.

Who knows the inscrutable design?  
    Blessed be He who took and gave.  
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,  
    Be weeping at her darling's grave?

We bow to Heaven, that will'd it so,  
 That darkly rules the fate of all,  
 That sends the respite or the blow,  
 That's free to give or to recall.

—THACKERAY, *The End of the Play*.

I would that thus when I shall see  
 The hour of death draw near to me,  
 Hope, blossoming within my heart,  
 May look to heaven as I depart.

—BRYANT.

Comfort thee, O thou mourner, yet awhile!  
 Again shall Elia's smile  
 Refresh thy heart, whose heart can ache no more.  
 What is it we deplore?

\* \* \* \* \*

He may have left the lowly walks of men;  
 Left them he has; what then?

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold him! from the region of the blest  
 He speaks: he bids thee rest.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;  
 The darkness deepens: Lord, with me abide!  
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
 Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
 Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away:  
 Change and decay in all around I see;  
 O Thou, who changest not, abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes;  
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows  
flee:

In life and death, O Lord, abide with me.

—HENRY FRANCIS LYTE.

That death seems but a covered way  
Which opens into light,  
Wherein no blinded child can stray  
Beyond the Father's sight;—

That care and trial seem at last,  
Through Memory's sunset air,  
Like mountain-ranges overpast  
In purple distance fair.

—WHITTIER.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the  
shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art  
with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

—BIBLE, *Psalms*.

Beyond the years the answer lies,  
Beyond where brood the grieving skies  
And Night drops tears.  
Where Faith rod-chastened smiles to rise  
And doff its fears,  
And carping Sorrow pines and dies—  
Beyond the years.

Beyond the years the prayer for rest  
Shall beat no more within the breast;  
The darkness clears,  
And Morn perched on the mountain's crest  
Her form uprears—  
The day that is to come is best,  
Beyond the years.

Beyond the years the soul shall find  
That endless peace for which it pined,  
For light appears,  
And to the eyes that still were blind  
With blood and tears,  
Their sight shall come all unconfined  
Beyond the years.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

God has his plans, and what if we  
With our sight be too blind to see  
Their full fruition; cannot he,  
Who made it, solve the mystery?  
One whom we loved has fall'n asleep,  
Not died; although her calm be deep,  
Some new, unknown, and strange surprise  
In Heaven holds enrapt her eyes.

\* \* \* \* \*

The house is dust, the voice is dumb,  
But through undying years to come,  
The spark that glowed within her soul  
Shall light our footsteps to the goal.  
She went her way; but oh, she trod  
The path that led her straight to God.



Such lives as this put death to scorn;  
They lose our day to find God's morn.

—PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR.

The work was done—  
How soon my Lucy's race was run!  
She died, and left to me  
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;  
The memory of what has been,  
And never more will be.

WORDSWORTH, *Lucy*.

Then be content, poor heart!  
God's plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold:  
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart;  
Time will reveal the calyxes of gold.  
And if through patient toil we reach the land  
Where tired feet with sandals loose may rest,  
When we shall clearly see and understand  
I think that we will say "God knows the best."

—MAY RILEY SMITH.

#### CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me!  
And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam,  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep  
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark!  
And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
When I embark!

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place  
The flood may bear me far,  
I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.

—TENNYSON.

#### THE FIRST SNOW FALL

The snow had begun in the gloaming,  
And busily all the night  
Had been heaping field and highway  
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock  
Wore ermine too dear for an earl,  
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree  
Was ridged inch deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara  
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,  
The stiff rails softened to swan's-down,  
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window  
The noiseless work of the sky,  
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,  
Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn  
Where a little headstone stood;  
How the flakes were folding it gently,  
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel  
Saying, "Father, who makes it snow?"  
And I told of the good All-father  
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,  
And thought of the leaden sky  
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,  
When the mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience  
That fell from that cloud like snow,  
Flake by flake, healing and hiding  
The scar that renewed our woe.

And again to the child I whispered,  
"The snow that husheth all,  
Darling, the merciful Father  
Alone can make it fall!"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her;  
And she, kissing back, could not know  
That my kiss was given to her sister,  
Folded close under deepening snow.

—LOWELL.

## RESIGNATION

There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there!  
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,  
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,  
And mournings for the dead;  
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,  
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions  
Not from the ground arise,  
But often times celestial benedictions  
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors;  
Amid these earthly damps  
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers  
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no Death! what seems so is transition;  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead,—the child of our affection,—  
But gone unto that school  
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,  
And Christ himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,  
By guardian angels led,  
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,  
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air;  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,  
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken  
The bond which nature gives,  
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,  
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;  
For when with raptures wild  
In our embrace we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace;  
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion  
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times impetuous with emotion  
And anguish long suppressed,  
The swelling heart heaves moaning like the ocean,  
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling  
We may not wholly stay;  
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,  
The grief that must have way.

—LONGFELLOW.

PROSPICE

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,  
The mist in my face,  
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote  
I am nearing the place,  
The power of the night, the press of the storm,  
The post of the foe;  
Where he stands, the Arch Foe in a visible form,  
Yet the strong man must go:  
For the journey is done and the summit attained,  
And the barriers fall,  
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,  
The reward of it all.  
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,  
The best and the last!  
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and fore-  
bore,  
And bade me creep past.  
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers  
The heroes of old,  
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears  
Of pain, darkness and cold.  
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,  
The black minute's at end,

And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,  
Shall dwindle, shall blend,  
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,  
Then a light, then thy breast,  
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,  
And with God be the rest.

—BROWNING.

Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,  
(Since He who knows our need is just,)   
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.  
Alas for him who never sees  
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!  
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,  
Nor looks to see the breaking day  
Across the mournful marbles play!  
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,  
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,  
That Life is ever lord of Death  
And Love can never lose its own!

WHITTIER, *Snow Bound*.









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